

Kentucky Teacher

November 2008

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

www.education.ky.gov

Schools getting early algebra lessons

Page 6

What's Inside

24 selected as Teacher	Schools, courts work together
Achievement Award winners 2	to create good citizens 9
Commissioner's Comments 3	Enrichment program enjoys
Schools, students benefit	success in inaugural summer 10
from assistance of psychologists 4	Star of Teaching goes the
School board clarifies KCCT procedures 5	extra mile for students 11
CSH helps schools start	Learning doesn't stop when
down road to good health 7	Corbin's school bells ring 12
Students go to high school	News for school leaders 13
from 'virtually' anywhere 8	Individualized instruction key for
	Special Education Teacher of the Year 16



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lexington, Kentucky
Permit No. 513

Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

Commissioner of Education
JON E. DRAUD

Director, Division of Communications
LISA GROSS

Editor
STEPHANIE SIRIA

Staff Writers
SUSAN RIDDELL
MATTHEW TUNGATE

Graphic Designer
JOHN BOONE

Photographer
AMY WALLOT

Kentucky Teacher is published by the Kentucky Department of Education for teachers, school administrators, counselors, support staff, parents, students, legislators, community leaders and others with a stake in public education. Please address correspondence to *Kentucky Teacher*, 612 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; e-mail kyteacher@education.ky.gov.

www.education.ky.gov

The Kentucky Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. Alternate formats of this publication are available upon request.

Printed with state funds by LexPress,
Lexington, Ky., on recycled paper
ISSN 1526-3584

Front cover: Kindergarten teacher Lawanna Treadway teaches mathematics activities using *Developing Algebraic Thinking (DAT)* at Southside Elementary School (Lee County).
Photo by Amy Wallot

24 Selected as Teacher Achievement Award winners

The Kentucky Department of Education and Ashland Inc. have selected 24 outstanding Kentucky educators as recipients of the 2009 Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards (TAA).

All 24 teachers were honored at a ceremony in Frankfort Oct. 22 in the state Capitol building. Ashland presented the 24 TAA recipients with cash awards and framed certificates.

The Kentucky Teacher Awards program combines the best elements of the Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards and the Kentucky Teacher of the Year programs. This marks the eighth year the Department of Education and Ashland have jointly honored Kentucky educators.

A blue-ribbon panel of veteran educators, many of whom have more than 30 years of

teaching experience, conducted judging in August. Applications included information on the nominees' teaching philosophies, their teaching experiences and involvement in their respective communities, as well as letters of recommendation from peers, students, parents, administrators and others.

MORE INFO ...

www.kentuckytoy.com

2008 Kentucky Blue Ribbon Schools selected

Four Kentucky public schools have been designated as 2008 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) — Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education. The four are:

- Highland Elementary, Daviess County
- Veterans Park Elementary, Fayette County
- May Valley Elementary, Floyd County
- White Hall Elementary, Madison County

Nationwide, nearly 300 schools were honored with NCLB — Blue Ribbon Schools awards, which recognize P-12 schools that help students achieve at very high levels or that make significant progress in closing achievement gaps.

The program requires schools to meet either of two assessment criteria. It recognizes schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance in reading and mathematics over the last three years in accordance with state assessment systems; and it rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent statewide in reading and mathematics on state assessments. Schools also must make adequate yearly progress under the requirements of the federal NCLB Act.

Representatives from each school attended recognition ceremonies Oct. 20-21 in Washington, D.C. Since the program's revamping in 2003, 21 Kentucky public schools have been named NCLB — Blue Ribbon Schools.

MORE INFO...

www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/index.html

The 24 winning teachers are:

Bullitt County
Caldwell County
Christian County
Clark County
Daviess County
Daviess County
Elliott County
Fayette County
Floyd County
Harlan Independent
Jefferson County
Jefferson County
Letcher County
Letcher County
Mason County
Morgan County
Murray Independent
Oldham County
Pulaski County
Rockcastle County
Scott County
Shelby County
Warren County
Washington County

Lisa Wathen, Freedom Elementary*
Jimmy Dyer, Caldwell Co. High
Alvia Littleton, North Drive Middle
Jan Horn, Shearer Elementary*
Angela Gunter, Daviess Co. High*
David Ruckdeschel, Daviess Co. Middle
Lonnie Laney, Elliott Co. High
Karen Gill, Henry Clay High*
Sandra Stapleton, Allen Central Middle
Barbra Ledford, Harlan Elementary*
Anita Winstead, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary
Margaret Mattingly, Thomas Jefferson Middle
Stacy Isaac, Martha Jane Potter Elementary
Regina Donour, Letcher Co. Central High
Amanda White, Charles Straub Elementary
Sabrina Back, Morgan Middle
Holly Bloodworth, Murray Elementary
Craig Grimm, North Oldham High
Jody Paver, Southwestern High
Melissa Singleton, Rockcastle Co. Middle*
Willow Hambrick, Royal Spring Middle*
Thom Coffee, Shelby West Middle*
Jennifer Clark, Cumberland Trace Elementary
Millie Blandford, Washington Co. High*

* Semifinalists for Kentucky Teacher of the Year



Photo by Amy Wallot

Amanda White works on adding to 10 in her 2nd-grade classroom at Charles Straub Elementary (Mason County). White is one of 24 Teacher Achievement Award winners this year.

Talk to the Experts ...

About Certification

Education Professional
Standards Board
100 Airport Road, 3rd Floor
Frankfort, KY 40601
Phone: (502) 564-4606
Fax: (502) 564-7080
Toll Free: (888) 598-7667
www.kyepsb.net

About Retirement

Kentucky Teachers'
Retirement System
479 Versailles Road
Frankfort, KY 40601-3868
Phone: (502) 848-8500
Fax: (502) 573-0199
Toll Free: (800) 618-1687
<http://ktrs.ky.gov>

Correction

In the October 2008 *Kentucky Teacher*, we ran a story about electronic writing portfolios that stated the Kentucky Department of Education recommends purging the working folders every year. Actually, the department recommends that students purge the folders at logical points in time, such as during the transition from elementary to middle school or middle to high school.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

By Jon E. Draud, Commissioner of Education

Kentucky schools, educators recognized for excellence

Success is all around us in Kentucky! Each fall, many awards and honors recognize the quality of our state's educators and substantial progress being made in the commonwealth's public schools. It's gratifying when the spotlight shines on our schools and educators. Below are some of the awards recently given to our outstanding teachers and schools.

You read on the previous page about the outstanding Kentucky educators, representing 21 school districts, who were chosen as recipients of the 2009 Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards and the four Kentucky public schools that have been designated as 2008 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education. These distinguished honors recognize the role education plays in developing a vital economy and the ways in which society as a whole benefits. *Kentucky Teacher* will be focusing more on the award recipients in upcoming issues of the publication. In addition, these awards acknowledge the caliber of educators we have statewide.

2008 American Star of Teaching Award

Laura Sanders, a kindergarten teacher at Cumberland Trace Elementary (Warren County), is one of 51 teachers nationwide selected to receive the 2008 American Star of Teaching Award this year from the U.S. Department of Education and the only teacher selected from Kentucky. For the 2006-07 school year, Sanders' students progressed from 52 percent reading at grade level in the fall to 91 percent in the spring. For the 2007-08 school year, her kindergartners started with 58 percent reading at grade level, and by mid-year, that figure rose to 85 percent. Sanders' progress with her students over her 11 years at Cumberland Trace

is attributed to her belief in her students' potential and a passion for teaching with high expectations that every child can learn.

2008 Kentucky Special Education Teacher of the Year

Selina Meyer, a teacher of students with functional mental disabilities at Indian Trail Elementary in Jefferson County, was named the 2008 Special Education Teacher of the Year earlier this year. Meyer's commitment to her students, throughout her seven years of teaching, is evident through the positive impact she makes on the lives of children with moderate and severe disabilities. She says, "Knowing that you have made a connection with a child who others think is lost is an unbelievable, indescribable feeling." Meyer also will represent Kentucky for the National CEC Special Education Teacher of the Year award, which will be announced in spring 2009.

Kentucky focuses on high teacher quality

What these awards demonstrate is the high level of teacher quality evident in Kentucky's educators. According to data from the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB), highly qualified teachers taught 98.5 percent of courses in all Kentucky schools from spring 2007 through 2008. In addition, more than 250 Kentucky teachers earned National Board certification in 2007. Kentucky now ranks eighth nationwide in the total number of National Board Certified Teachers with 1,376.

Kentucky provides support for its National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) candidates, including:

- reimbursement to the candidate's district for substitute teachers used to provide up to five days of release time for the candidate
- up to \$400 stipend for the NBPTS candidate to prepare for assessment center activities
- mentoring services from National Board

Certified Teachers throughout the certification process

In addition, there are incentives for educators who earn National Board Certification:

- 75 percent reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for the \$2,500 certification fee
- a \$2,000 annual salary supplement for the life of the certificate each year the national board certified teacher teaches or mentors in the area in which he/she holds National Board Certification, as stipulated in KRS 157.395

In addition, National Board Certified teachers may receive a stipend for mentoring NBPTS candidates. A school district or cohort may submit a proposal to the EPSB to pay the stipend. Also, teachers who achieve National Board Certification can apply for a Rank I from the Education Professional Standards Board. Rank I is the highest rank in Kentucky and allows teachers an increase in salary based on the district pay scale that considers education level and experience.

The Kentucky Department of Education has made it a priority to secure the talents and skills of the highest quality professionals for every classroom, school and district in

Kentucky. Traditional education programs, scholarships, alternative certification routes, professional development and early identification initiatives are tools the department offers you to accomplish this undertaking. We believe these programs provide the state with diverse, competent, caring educators, who are essential to ensure that children reach their maximum potential.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Assessment Center testing window for 2008-09 first-time candidates is **July 1, 2008 - June 15, 2009**. I encourage Kentucky's educators to take advantage of this

and other opportunities. I believe they will not only benefit you professionally, but will also contribute to the progress we continue to see in your students, your schools and your communities.

I also want to take a moment to thank you for your thoughts and concern following my mild stroke that occurred several weeks ago. As my health continues to improve, I am eager to resume my job as commissioner and, with your help, concentrate on leading this state to academic proficiency!

(To contact Commissioner Draud on this topic, e-mail him at jon.draud@education.ky.gov.)



Draud

MORE INFO...
www.kyepsb.net/certification/nationalboard.asp



Photo by Amy Wallot

Debating science

2007 Advanced Placement (AP) Teacher of the Year Kirk Barnett asks a question of students in his AP Environmental Science class at Russell High (Russell Independent). Students were debating whether the projected consequences of ozone depletion justify phasing out chlorofluorocarbons.

Make Plans to Attend the 2009 Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference

**Building to Proficiency and Beyond:
Sharing Success from
Kentucky Schools**



March 5-6, Louisville, Ky.
Kentucky International Convention Center

<http://kentuckytlc.org/KTLC>

Meet new board member Stephen Neal

Last May, Gov. Steve Beshear appointed five members to the Kentucky Board of Education. Four appointments replaced members whose terms had expired, and one person was appointed to replace a member who resigned.

To give educators throughout the state the opportunity to learn more about the men and women who serve on the state board, *Kentucky Teacher* is continuing its series of question-and-answer sessions with board members. Stephen Neal, whose term runs until April 14, 2012, is the final board member to be profiled.



Neal

Association. He is a certified social studies teacher. He earned a bachelor's degree from Indiana State University and holds a master's degree from DePauw University.

Neal is a graduate of Leadership Louisville and has served on the Louisville Free Public Library Board and as president of the Church of the Epiphany Parish Council. He and his wife, Linda, have three children and three grandchildren.

What do you think are some of the unique aspects about education in Kentucky?

No question in my mind that the truly unique aspect about public education in Kentucky is KERA. The fact that our political leadership tackled a complete overhaul of public education in 1990 was unheard of – bold and coupled with a huge tax increase. The end product was unique and, in many ways, remains so to this day. KERA, like any massive piece of legislation, had and has its warts, but its impact remains profoundly positive for Kentucky children.

Where is education in Kentucky headed?

In many ways, I believe we are adrift. We have a state budget crisis that is greatly exasperating our ability to move public education in Kentucky to the next level. We need

(Continued on page 5)

Board needs to address 'financial needs' of schools

Neal, of Louisville, has served as executive director of the Jefferson County Teachers Association for the past 26 years. Prior to serving as JCTA executive director, Neal served as executive director of NEA-South Bend and worked for the Indiana State Teachers



Photo by Amy Wallot

Equine education

Woodford County Middle School writing teacher Stephanie Henry pets a horse at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington. Educators from varying disciplines across the state attended the two-day Equine 101 for Educators workshop, Sept. 26-27, where they learned about the history, economics, science and careers in the horse industry. The workshop is one of many events in preparation for the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games, which will be held at the Kentucky Horse Park.

Schools, students benefit from assistance of psychologists

Misty Lay, School Psychologist

Bullitt County Public Schools

What do consultation, intervention, prevention and assessment all have in common? School psychology.

Over the past decade, Kentucky school districts have been faced with a barrage of accountability initiatives, most prominent being 2001's federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The primary objective of NCLB is to ensure that all students have access to high-quality instruction and a rigorous comprehensive curriculum. More than any other time in educational history, there has been a stronger focus on preventative research-based practice and an alignment of assessment and intervention for all students. Tighter budgets have led to school districts needing to do more with less and to use all of their personnel more efficiently and effectively. This includes school psychologists.

There are more than 340 school psychologists employed by school districts in the state of Kentucky. Most school psychologists work through the exceptional children, or special education, department as the persons who complete special education eligibility assessments.

While this is a very important role to fulfill, it is somewhat limited in view of the full scope and practice that school psychologists can offer to districts. School psychologists are highly trained in both psychology and education in a specialist degree track, which requires at least 60 graduate hours and a 1,200-hour internship.

The focus of school psychology training and practice falls into two general areas: improve competencies for all students and build and maintain the capacities of systems (including schools, families and communities) to ensure a commitment to continuous improvement. School psychologists are trained to collaborate with all stakeholders, using their knowledge of child development, to find effective solutions to learning and behavior problems through consultation. In addition, school psychologists lead the way in understanding the mental health needs of students and have the skills to design and implement programs that will promote positive behavior, from early childhood into adulthood.

These intervention services include:

- assisting school staff and parents with functional behavior assessments (FBA) and behavior intervention plans
- working with groups of students on skills such as conflict resolution, peer mediation, anger management or adjustment issues
- assisting schools and the community in the aftermath of crises such as suicide or other deaths, natural disasters and other acts of violence

Perhaps the area in which school psychologists are most competent is problem solving. A huge facet of the problem-solving process is data-based decision making and accountability. As noted earlier, school psychologists are best known for their work on gathering evaluation data for special education decisions on an individual child. School psychologists are trained to support systems, which expands their focus from the individual level to the classroom, school and district levels. They can be part of the district leadership in identifying and assessing factors (cognitive, emotional, social and behavioral) that impact overall student achievement

By and large, school psychologists are likely the best trained, but most underutilized, individuals in school districts on assessment. They are well trained in a variety of assessment and evaluation methods, including curriculum-based measurement, functional behavior assessment, norm-referenced tests, summative and formative assessments, and progress monitoring. Regardless of the assessment method used, the purpose of assessment is always the same — identify student strengths and weaknesses in relation to core content and academic expectations, and design appropriate intervention systems to meet their needs. As best described by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), "all assessment activities should relate to prevention and intervention."

Training in statistics, research methods and program evaluation also provide critical components in student achievement. With the movement toward "research-based" practices, programs and interventions, marketing companies that are offering the latest and greatest in "scientifically-based"

programs to increase student achievement bombard school districts. School psychologists have the training to review the research behind the programs and interventions and evaluate the effectiveness of programs being implemented to ensure that this investment results in positive outcomes. School psychologists can be vehicles for turning the research into effective instructional practice.

In the movement toward increased accountability for higher standards with fewer resources, school psychologists are able to offer a unique collection of skills to support students, parents, teachers and districts. Their training adds an unequivocal element to the education system responsible for preparing Kentucky's youth for a successful future.

Editor's note: This article was submitted to Kentucky Teacher in conjunction with National School Psychology Awareness Week (Nov. 10-14).

MORE INFO...

misty.lay@bullitt.kyschools.us
www.kapsonline.org

School board clarifies KCCT procedures

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Regulations clarifying that students should have limited access to content and less help may be offered for most students with limited English proficiency during statewide accountability tests have passed the Kentucky Board of Education and are awaiting legislative approval.

The board originally passed the limits at its August meeting and, following hearings on the revisions, gave them final approval at the October board meeting.

The amended Administration Code for Kentucky's Educational Assessment Program, which establishes appropriate testing practices for the Kentucky Core Content Test, clarifies that teachers should remove or cover classroom materials that may contain tested materials. The Department of Education is working on a "thorough training package to help schools" on the issue, according to Ken Draut, associate commissioner of the Office of Assessment and Accountability.

Draut also emphasized that "there is no expectation of a sterile environment, but there are ways to keep an inviting environment while meeting the letter of the regulation."

Other clarifications in the regulation prohibit anyone from reading test items prior to the exam;

ban cell phones and other wireless devices during testing; prohibit teachers from coaching or editing answers on a test; and ban students from working ahead to future parts of the test.

Schools also will be expected to continue normal instruction during the testing window, except during test sessions. The regulation now clarifies that portfolio development time cannot be "excessive," and schools will be barred from implementing rewards solely for the assessment and from using Extended School Services funds for test preparation.

The other regulation deals with accommodations for special student populations, including students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. The revision increases the use of technology and incorporates federal requirements for students with limited English proficiency. Scribes may only help students on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) tests who have not reached English proficiency.

Three advisory groups advocated removing or covering classroom materials, which is the standard for 38 states and the District of Columbia. Nine states have partial bans on classroom materials, while only two had no prohibitions.

The regulations now go before a review committee of state legisla-



Photo by Amy Wallot

Dr. Samuel Robinson, left, poses with Laura McGrail, a school psychologist for Henderson County schools, and Jon E. Draud, Kentucky Commissioner of Education, after McGrail was named the 2008 recipient of the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award at the October state board meeting. McGrail has served as school psychologist for more than 20 years.

tors for final approval.

During its October meeting, the state school board also issued a resolution recognizing the first week of October as the annual Week of the Classroom Teacher, which is designated as such by the Association for Childhood Education International.

The board also presented the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award to Henderson County School Psychologist

Laura McGrail. McGrail has served as school psychologist for more than 20 years. She created the district's Autism Consultation Team, helped develop a high school Work Transition Program and served as a liaison between the school district and local physicians.

The group heard a presentation on achievement gaps related to students with disabilities; received an update on gifted and talented edu-

cation; discussed new superintendent's evaluation instrument; and discussed items related to the 2009 session of the Kentucky General Assembly.

Other presentations included:

- reports from the Christian County, Covington Independent and Jefferson County school districts about school and district support plans related to student achievement
- the Kentucky Adolescent Literacy Plan
- release of data related to CATS and the federal No Child Left Behind Act

The board took the following actions:

- approved the district facility plan for Augusta Independent
- approved district facility plan amendments for Caldwell and Carlisle Counties
- gave final approval to 704 KAR 3:390, Extended School Services
- gave final approval to 703 KAR 5:140, Requirements for school and district report cards
- agreed to recommend the superintendent's evaluation instrument developed by the Kentucky School Boards Association to local boards of education

The board's next regular meeting will be Nov. 5 at the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville.

Meet from page 4

a complete review of KERA – what is working and what is not. As an old history teacher, I believe you can't know where you are headed if you don't know where you have been. As a former lobbyist, I can say with certainty that there is a legislative political divide on many of the components of KERA – that divide has a negative impact on moving public education forward in our commonwealth.

Other than more money, what do Kentucky schools need most?

Give me a break – it's all about money! We need to drastically lower class size! We must significantly

revamp our assessment system in a manner that allows for meaningful and quality assessment and, at the same time, provides more time for teachers to teach. We must do a comprehensive study of our "Program of Studies." This study must evaluate what we are saying we expect to be taught, how long it takes to teach each standard to proficiency and how much time we have in a school year to teach the standards required.

We must be more aggressive in our efforts to get children to school each day.

Student disruptive behavior in the classroom has a negative impact on the ability of a teacher to deliver high-quality instruction. We must evaluate our strat-

egies for dealing with disruptive students – focusing on positive student behavior.

We need nurses in our schools. The health of our children has a major impact on the quality of learning. We have far too many children, largely in low-performing schools, that need medical attention – doctors and dentists.

We need to take all necessary steps to be sure that all our children are properly fed and clothed. In urban school districts, we must take steps to deal with student mobility. The number of children that live in poverty and, hence, move each month when the rent comes due, has a negative impact on the continuity of instruction. I could go on and on.

What impact do you hope to bring to the board in the immediate future?

I hope to bring the views of classroom teachers to the board table. I believe strongly that the working conditions of our teachers are the learning conditions of our children.

What are the biggest obstacles facing Kentucky children?

The political gridlock of our elected leaders to do what is right for our children.

What lies beyond "proficiency" in 2014?

I am not at all sure we can or should look beyond "proficiency" at this point. I believe I am a realist, and while my view may not

be well received – or will be perceived as negative – I believe we have major obstacles facing us that make reaching proficiency by 2014 difficult at best. There are those that say we should stop talking about our funding crisis. I care too much about public schools and children to live in that make-believe world – proficiency costs.

What do you want Kentucky's past and current teachers to know about you?

For the past 34 years, I have devoted my work life to the advancement of public education. I love public education and believe in our public schools – public schools are the backbone of our democracy.

Mathematics that is all DAT and more

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

It's one thing to know. It's another thing to understand.

That's the message Lee and Carter counties' schools are sending to district primary teachers and students through Developing Algebraic Thinking (DAT).

So far, the message is being heard loud and clear.

DAT is a two-year project exploring how algebra in the primary education levels establishes the groundwork that is crucial for future learning in mathematics.

Lee and Carter counties are in the second year of implementing DAT into all district elementary schools with help from the P-12 Math and Science Outreach Unit housed under the Partnership Institute for Math and Science Education Reform (PIMSER) at the University of Kentucky, with funding from the No Child Left Behind Title II B Mathematics and Science Partnerships competitive grant process administered by the Kentucky Department of Education.

Testing shows DAT is paying off. All eight elementary schools (six in Carter County and two in Lee County) met their annual measurable objectives in mathematics for the 2007-08 school year. Commonwealth Accountability Testing System mathematics indices improved by at least 4.37 points in each district.

"Student achievement in math was low across the district," Southside Elementary (Lee County) primary teacher Lawanna Treadway said. "We needed a new method of teaching math to our students that would infuse our classrooms with a sense of excitement toward the subject, while increasing their understanding and success rate."

"If we are going to prepare our students for school and life beyond high school, we need to prepare them to think," added Leigh Williams, a 4th-grade teacher at Upper Tygart Elementary (Carter County). "When we begin teaching higher-order thinking skills at an early age, as DAT does, we are preparing them to be successful when they take college entrance exams, thus preparing them for the next

step in their lives."

That preparation starts with realizing algebra is more than memorization.

"We are really trying to get at the conceptual understanding," said Rhonda Allen, a PIMSER regional teaching partner working with both counties. "A lot of people think algebra is solving equations and graphing. Those are algebra skills, but only a small part of the bigger concept."

"Last year when we got into this, we realized there needed to be a lot of content support — not just pedagogy, but content support in making the connections between number sense and algebraic thinking," Allen added. "A lot of algebra preparation is embedded in number sense, but if you don't know that, you don't know to be very intentional with building that connection with the students. We started off with patterns and functions, and now we're really getting into the algebra."

Karen Stansbury, a primary teacher at Beattyville Elementary (Lee County), said DAT feeds off further evaluation, sometimes allowing students to come up with more than one correct answer or even learn through incorrect answers.

"DAT means moving kids from the very concrete (manipulatives) to mental images to the abstract in their algebraic thinking processes," Stansbury said. "Sometimes children are asked to think of a number. That number of manipulatives is laid out on the table. A cup covers some of the manipulatives. They may have the number six, but only three objects are showing. The children try to guess how many are inside the cup. Once the children think they know, they remove the cup to see if they were right. They can then move into making the equation $6 - ? = 3$ or $3 + ? = 6$. They were finding the unknown — an early stage of algebraic thinking."

Treadway said these concepts need to be reinforced throughout a student's early educational experience.

"This encompasses all of the learning

"It doesn't matter how much money and resources you have if you don't have the time to think and reflect on how to use them."

— Rhonda Allen



Photo by Amy Wallot

Students eagerly hold up the matching number during mathematics activities in Lawanna Treadway's kindergarten class at Southside Elementary School (Lee County).

styles of children through manipulatives, technology and literature, emphasizing there are other ways to solve a problem than the standard algorithm method," Treadway said.

Developing Algebraic Thinking training consists of two main components, one each for teachers and administrators. (For more on the administrative component, see the February issue of *Kentucky Teacher*.)

Participating teachers in Lee and Carter counties schools were given release time to meet together prior to DAT implementation in their classrooms. For students to flourish in mathematics, the teachers rely on monthly meetings to bounce ideas and arising problems off each other.

"One of the most valuable aspects of this is giving teachers time," Allen said. "It's that monthly time to work on some of these strategies and to work on them from a student's perspective. Teachers can work, reflect and think about how they are going to use these tools. They can have conversations with others both vertically and horizontally in the learning community."

"It doesn't matter how much money and resources you have if you don't have the time to think and reflect on how to use them," Allen added.

Stansbury said the collaboration with other teachers has brought her new insight.

"I have learned new things from DAT presenters and my colleagues and have been exposed to math literature, manipulatives and materials that otherwise, I wouldn't have known about," Stansbury said. "Teachers learn from each other and are encouraged to try things they never tried before. This helps teachers with math-related activities

from kindergarten through upper elementary grades and helps widen their comfort level with teaching algebraic ideas."

Bringing Lee and Carter counties' elementary teachers together for this professional development made for a larger number of teachers to share ideas. "In smaller districts, you may have only one or two kindergarten teachers," Allen said. "When you combine them, now you've got a team of kindergarten teachers. It broadens the conversation."

Teachers participating in the DAT project also are sharing these new concepts with other teachers in their respective district to get everyone on the same page.

"We have been able to reach out to all Carter County math teachers with our Summer Teacher Academy professional development in which we trained other Carter County math teachers and aides in DAT," Williams said. "The support system we are building in our schools is of benefit to our students."

Has DAT made a difference? Treadway thinks so.

"It forced me to take a step back and re-evaluate my own teaching methods for math," she said. "It also showed me a new way to teach concepts that foster a more exciting learning environment in my classroom. It's the missing link in mathematical education for our students. ... Most of all it has the potential to make us better teachers by helping us understand just how our students learn math."

MORE INFO...

Rhonda Allen, allenrhonda@bellsouth.net
http://my.nctm.org/eresources/view_article.asp?article_id=2072

CSH helps schools start down road to good health

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Arianna Gardner knows the answer. She raises her hand in earnest, and Joyce Ellis soon calls on her.

"After you go to the bathroom," the Stamping Ground Elementary (Scott County) kindergarten says excitedly.

"That's a big one," Ellis replies, referring to her earlier question of when you are supposed to wash your hands.

Ellis, the health service coordinator for Scott County Schools, concludes the hand-washing discussion after mentioning the importance of washing your hands before you eat, as well as several other key times.

She then demonstrates the proper way for students to thoroughly wash their hands with a step-by-step process. Lastly, she shows the eager students the best way to cough or sneeze if there's not a handy tissue available — into a sleeve.

Ellis' hand-washing lesson is only the beginning when it comes to the information being made available to students and faculty in the three Scott County schools where Ellis exclusively works.

"I really hit Coordinated School Health (CSH) hard in my three schools," said Ellis, who has been in the district for more than a decade. "In 1999, there was a task force in Kentucky that was funded by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) doing Coordinated School Health programs for the summer. I went to that and was introduced to the concept of Coordinated School Health and was totally sold on it. This is school health."

Kentucky Department of Education Coordinated School Health Team Leader Barbara Donica said CSH is an initiative that provides structure and knowledge for schools and districts that want to create and maintain a healthy environment for students and faculty.

"We get them on the right path," Donica said.

J.W. Mattingly, associate superintendent for Bardstown Independent Schools, said his district was in great need of change before it got involved with CSH.

"Our students were showing symptoms that used to be shown only by older, obese adults, such as Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure," Mattingly said. "It is imperative that the school system do as much as possible to educate students about the importance of health maintenance and disease prevention and the importance of making healthy choices."

"School personnel must understand the

role they play in protecting, maintaining and promoting their health and the health of others through healthy behavior and choices," Mattingly added.

Schools like Stamping Ground Elementary and districts like Bardstown Independent are now thriving from a healthy standpoint thanks to the support provided by Coordinated School Health, which is built around eight components:

- health education
- family/community involvement
- health promotion for staff
- healthy school environment
- counseling, psychological and social services
- nutrition services
- health services
- physical education

"What appealed to me about CSH was the formal structure associated with the eight components," Mattingly said. "... We had excellent people who covered and crisscrossed the eight component areas. However, there was not a mechanism in place to bring these resources together to maximize our total effort to serve our community and students. The CSH provides that forum for us to bring personnel and resources together as a Comprehensive District Health Council to allow the eight component areas to work in concert for better customer service to our students, parents, staff and community."

Schools and districts using Coordinated School Health begin with a School Health Index (SHI), an assessment and planning guide developed by the CDC, Donica said. The SHI has a module for each of the eight Coordinated School Health components and also can be used to evaluate a school's tobacco use, safety programs and policy.

"What helped our school so much was the task force required us to do a School Health Index document," Ellis said of Stamping Ground Elementary. "It's a report card for all of these programs in your school. You grade them. You brainstorm about what can be done to improve there. When you get finished, you've got a document with numerical scores that show where you are, where you want to be, what it would take to get there and how you prioritize what needs to be done. It's an amazing tool."

Ellis soon realized her school was lack-



Photo by Amy Wallot

RN Joyce Ellis teaches kindergarten students at Stamping Ground Elementary (Scott County) the proper way to wash their hands. Ellis teaches student and staff wellness programs for three schools in the Scott County district.

ing in the health promotion for staff component.

"We scored almost zero," Ellis said. "We were doing nothing to help improve staff wellness. In research, I found out that if I help teachers feel better, they teach better, and the kids get it, too. The role modeling is unbelievable, and we were at the bottom in that area."

Based on the SHI findings, Ellis continues to promote staff wellness with six- to eight-week exercise programs and monthly health topics with displays.

"If it's breast cancer, I have mannequins you can feel lumps on," she said. "I always do diabetes screenings, too."

"We do education about heart health, as well," Ellis added. "One of the best things I got from the Coordinated School Health funding track was a heart obstacle course that goes all over the gym. We can teach anything with that. We've branched out into nutrition, obesity and physical activity parts. The kids absolutely love it."

Bardstown schools also have events and information readily available for those within the district. Schools within the district have regularly provided dental, vision and hearing screenings, as well as checking the body mass index of students periodically.

Through CSH and its Comprehensive District Health Council, Bardstown schools also have better air quality, easier access to school nurses and defibrillators.

"Having defibrillators in all buildings has already saved one life," Mattingly said.

Coordinated School Health is able to thrive in state public schools thanks to partnerships within state government and local communities and CSH teams assembled within school districts.

Everyone has the same goal in mind, according to Donica.

"Coordinated School Health and those we work with must do what we can so children can reach the highest level of student academic achievement by removing mental, physical and other barriers to learning."

Ellis agreed.

"We would not be where we are even in our practical living scores — not to mention the health of our kids and staff — if it wasn't for Coordinated School Health," she said. "I'm convinced of that."

MORE INFO...

Barbara Donica, barbara.donica@education.ky.gov, (502) 564-2706.

www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/School+Health

Students go to high school from 'virtually' anywhere

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Samantha Edwards looks out her window into the city of Milan, Italy, following a long photo shoot. The professional model from Union in Boone County has to get back to her chemistry homework.

Like thousands of students in Kentucky, she is studying core content, doing assignments given by demanding teachers and preparing for state tests. Unlike most students in Kentucky, she takes a full complement of classes as a senior at the Barren Academy of Virtual and Expanded Learning (BAVEL) without ever stepping into a classroom or seeing any of her teachers in person.

After one year at Larry A. Ryle High School (Boone County), this is Edwards' third year at BAVEL — a fully accredited, diploma-granting school in Barren County offering online-only classes. The classes are offered through the Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS).

"Homeschooling was not an option, so I would have had to stay in traditional face-to-face school and miss out on all of the incredible experiences I have had and cultures I have had the chance to live in over the past few years," Edwards said. "Italy has been the most exotic and technologically challenging place I have done my schoolwork in. While computers are used every day in business in this part of the world, high-speed Internet and Wi-Fi in residences are very rare. While in Italy I was able to travel around a little bit, and my mom made sure my school work went everywhere with me. I have done homework in Milan, Rome, Tuscany and Nice, France."

BAVEL Director Amanda Wright said the school started five years ago when Barren County saw the need for an alternative-learning environment. There are 60 students, and about half are from outside Barren County, Wright said. Thirty-one districts have non-resident contracts with Barren County.

"I've got some students for whom this may be their last alternative to dropping out, but then I've also got absolutely wonderfully motivated, disciplined students who just prefer the online environment, who don't really need the social environment at school," Wright said.

Students receive a username and password to log on to the KVHS Web site with links to each class they are enrolled in. Students go into the class and read the content, which is organized by modules. Classes are set up on Blackboard. Wright said there is a lot of content to read, supplemental videos to watch and practice assignments and homework. Students take online tests.

Teachers contact students and grade their work. They and students also communicate via an instant messenger program, e-mail, online chat session and phone "so there's definitely interaction," she said. Students also can discuss with each other through discussion boards and instant messaging.

Edwards said it took a while to get the hang of the system and a new way of learning.

"After being in front of teachers for nine years it was an adjustment ...," she said. "I found the classes to be very challenging. Pre-calculus and chemistry were especially difficult to understand without the help of a teacher to explain some of the concepts. I actually had to go to a tutor for a period of time for each of these classes for some additional help."

Wright said Barren County wanted students to have the option to work exclusively online from home, which warranted the need for a separate high school. In traditional high schools, students are typically only allowed to take one or two courses online and must do so from the brick-and-mortar setting.

"But to do it exclusively and to be able to do it from home, that was a lot for a traditional high school to take on," she said.

It would have been a lot for students to take on as well. KVHS Instructional Supervisor Beth Gaunce said students at traditional schools pay \$300 per online class, while BAVEL students pay \$50, which is refunded with a 60 percent average or better. Barren County pays the full enrollment fee for BAVEL students.

"So at \$50 apiece, even if they didn't pass the course, that is much more manageable than \$300," she said. "It made it possible for students to take a whole curriculum online rather than just a course here and a course there."

Gaunce said students learn a lot more going through online classes than if they get their general education degree, which some students might consider along with going to BAVEL. They get core content, learn skills and are asked to perform at a high level. The classes are designed in accordance with core content and with more individual attention because teachers work with one student at a time, which helps keep students engaged, she said.

"There is no back of the class in a virtual classroom. If you're in the class and doing something, then you're engaged in learning."

Wright thinks the primary benefit to students is flexibility. Classes can be accessed 24 hours a day from any Internet-connected computer. Students also receive a high-level curriculum, including 20 Advanced Placement classes.

"I think we produce very highly motivated, disciplined learners, because the students have to take responsibility for their courses," she said. "They have to make themselves get up in the morning and log on and read through all the content. They're not passive learners anymore."

Michelle Clark is a 34-year teaching veteran, including four years teaching KVHS mathematics. She said courses do not take less time than traditional classes and are not easier. Students need to regularly log in and put five to 10 hours per



Photo by Amy Wallot

BAVEL senior Samantha Edwards works on an AP Psychology assignment in a Florence, Ky., coffee shop before a fitting for a modeling show in Cincinnati.

class into study per week.

"The students must be doing this not just because they want the credit, but because they want it and are willing to put in the work necessary to get it. It takes enough maturity and self-discipline to see it through," she said. "Good communication skills are also a plus. There is an understanding that keeping in communication with the instructors and letting them know when circumstances are going to require extensions or special help is a part of taking an online course."

Gaunce believes BAVEL is the start of a trend.

"When we talk about interventions for students who are having problems, this is a way for them to get their education, graduate from high school and move on to what-

ever they want to do next, outside the limits of the traditional day, the traditional place and maybe an environment in which they weren't successful before. I think we'll see a lot more of that," she said.

Wright said she could see online schools becoming more popular, but only to a certain extent.

"This program is for a certain type of student in a certain situation, and I think that it will continue to grow," she said. "Definitely there will be many more across the state and our enrollment will continue to increase, but I don't think it will ever completely take away the brick-and-mortar schools."

MORE INFO ...

<http://local.barren.kyschools.us/administrative/bavel>

Schools, courts work together to create good citizens

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Democracy is rarely more on the minds of residents of the United States than during November elections, especially when the presidency is on the ballot as it is this year. One of the foundations of democracy is an engaged citizenry, and teachers from around Kentucky are teaming with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to teach future voters the importance of their role.

Teachers across the commonwealth and the rest of the country use free materials from the Center for Civic Education to promote civic competence and responsibility among the nation's elementary and secondary students.

Kentucky teachers primarily use two programs, according to Deborah Williamson, executive officer of the AOC's Department of Court Services. They are "We the People ... The Citizen and the Constitution" and "Project Citizen."

When AOC staff first proposed civic- and law-related education to the court in the late 1980s, Williamson said, they believed that students who studied civics and law would understand the political and legal systems if they were able to participate and be rewarded for their knowledge and contributions. Judges agreed that if students believed in and knew the system, they would be less likely to violate the law and be productive members of society, she said.

"The courts do have a role in this process and as much as we can support the school system, cooperate with the school system in educating young people, so much the better for the health of the commonwealth," Williamson said.

"We the People" is the older of the two major programs, she said, with AOC implementing the program in Kentucky in 1993. "We the People ..." provides upper elementary, middle and high school students a complement to the regular school curriculum with instruction on the history and principles of constitutional democracy in the United States. After studying the textbook, students prepare for the simulated congressional hearing. Upon completion of the course, they receive a certificate of achievement signed

by their member of Congress or other prominent official.

Kentucky Department of Education social studies consultants Mendy Meehan (elementary school), Paula Goss (middle school) and Mark Kopp (high school) are all big supporters of the program.

Kopp said high school social studies courses are integrated, so when there is material like the "We the People ..." textbook, it's very easy to pick out a unit and pull out a lesson and some materials on whatever the topic is. "It's very solid instructionally, and it's really easy for the kids to relate to the materials," he said.

Kopp said inquiry-based questions lead the lessons. Goss said she likes the program because it is very interactive.

"The activities really guide students into being able to have civil discourse, talk about opposing views and accept others' views," Goss said. "It basically covers the civics standards in core content."

Kopp said students can enter a statewide "We the People ..." competition that is a mock congressional hearing. Groups of students study different chapters in the book and know them thoroughly, he said. Judges, made up of members of the judiciary, other public officials and Department of Education staff, ask questions during the mock hearing that are related to one of the chapters. The students know the questions ahead of time but not which question they will be asked, he said. They are judged by how well they know the material and how well they answer the questions.

But students don't have to compete to implement the curriculum, Kopp said. "It's free, it's extraordinarily solid material, and it's across grade levels," he said.

Each year the AOC sponsors a "We the People ..." training for teachers at the AOC's offices in Frankfort. Attendance and books are free for attendees.

Project Citizen

"Project Citizen," which was piloted in 1995, is for upper elementary and middle school students to find a problem in the community, research it, develop alternate solutions and present one to a legisla-



Photo by Amy Wallot

Austin Hunsaker teaches about the Virginia Plan and the Pickney Plan from the "We the People..." curriculum at Henry County High School. The curriculum promotes civic competence and responsibility to Kentucky students.

tive body, Meehan said.

As part of the research, classes invite government officials into the classroom, which helps students understand different officials' roles and their own. "It's much better than saying, 'Here's the three branches of government. This is what they do,'" Meehan said.

Williamson, of the AOC, said a project that sticks out in her mind was one where Meehan's class decided an animal control officer was shooting stray dogs rather than subduing them. The students researched animal control policies from across the country, surveyed the community — "they really did some substantive homework" — and took the information to the city council, which rejected it. The students did more work and took it back to the city council, which agreed to use stun guns instead of lethal force. "Everybody from the county attorney to all of the council members were just really in awe of what those kids were able to do," she said.

Earl Kuhnell, AOC state coordinator for "We the People..." "Project Citizen" and other Center for Civic Education programs, said students have state and national showcases where they present their projects to a panel of judges. State

winners go to the annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislators for judging. They are graded from superior to honorable mention. This year Henry County received a superior rating, one of 20 to receive that rating.

But the important part of "Project Citizen" is for students to learn about their community and how to be actively engaged in it, he said. "You're talking about kids who might be on a Native American reservation who are studying their problems, their issues in their community, which may be totally different from an issue in the downtown neighborhoods of Los Angeles," Kuhnell said.

Judy Rice, social studies teacher at Henry County High School, says both programs are invaluable.

"I love the materials and resources for the program," Rice said. "I thought it was so valuable that I developed and was able to get a 'We the People.../Project Citizen' class offered to our students after SBDM (School-Based Decision Making) approval," she said.

The curriculum also is used in Advanced Placement U.S. History and Social Studies I for freshmen, she said. Rice used the full curriculum of both "We the People ..." and "Project Citizen" when

she taught political science to her seniors two years ago, and she now teaches a class called Life 101 in which students complete their senior project and learn valuable life skills. One of her units is citizenship, she said.

"As for my course, I find it very important to educate our seniors on how to be productive citizens and to know and, hopefully, fulfill the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizenship," Rice said. "We review the key concepts of constitutional rights using 'We the People ...' and use 'Project Citizen' after the citizenship unit of 'We the People ...' 'We the People ...' helps break down constitutional rights for teenagers that most 'texts' do not do. As for 'Project Citizen,' it breaks everything down into steps so that students understand public policy and the steps to the program."

MORE INFO ...

Mendy Meehan, (502) 564-2106, mendy.meehan@education.ky.gov

Paula Goss, (502) 564-2106, paula.goss@education.ky.gov

Mark Kopp, (502) 564-2106, mark.kopp@education.ky.gov

Earl Kuhnell, (502) 572-2350, earlkuhnell@kycourts.net

Enrichment program enjoys success in inaugural summer

By Tom Dekle

Nelson County Schools

At least 125 students in Nelson County were able to get buggy over learning this summer while they shaped up their brains with books, puzzles and fun science projects. Originally billed as a "one-room school on wheels," the "On The Road to Learning" program met with more success than anticipated in its inaugural summer.

With weekly themes such as "Buggy over learning," "Dive into learning" and "Shape up your brain to learn," the program used hands-on learning techniques and fun projects to tackle lessons in reading, writing, mathematics, science and art.

Sponsored by the Nelson County school district and the Village Family Resource and Youth Services Center (FRYSC), based in Boston and New Haven, the new summer learning initiative made weekly visits to several locations in the Boston and New Haven communities to provide an educational boost for children during the summer break from school.

An unexpected bonus was the strong parental participation with the program, said Victoria Terstegge, the teacher in charge of the "On the Road to Learning" program.

Terstegge, along with FRYSC helpers Shay Rogers and Cindy Simpson, traveled between community locations with five sets of learning centers to conduct activities tied to the theme of the week.

Terstegge said she used a science lesson as her starting point to build cohesive lesson plans that tied together concepts in several core content areas. The idea was to keep it interesting and fun for students in several age groups while providing a scholastic boost during the summer.

Participation "exceeded what we thought," Terstegge said, noting that turnout was more than double the program's initial goals.

The lessons helped young children prepare for preschool and helped keep older children on track with learning, said Rogers, a college student studying early childhood learning at Elizabethtown

Community College. The team also provided good modeling for parents on how to ask their children educational questions, Terstegge said, while involving them in the learning process.

"Parents run part of our centers and even help clean up," Terstegge said.

"I wasn't expecting that at all," Rogers said.

In Boston, 78 children in 51 families participated in the program during seven weeks of the eight-week program. In New Haven, 52 students in 35 families participated this past summer, according to program records. Students ranged from age 2 to 7th graders, Terstegge said, and came from inside and outside of Nelson County.

"When we talk about how families learn, each person helps the other — a community of learners," Terstegge said. She also pointed out that the summer learning program worked in much the same way, with topics spanning several different educational levels and students helping each other.

The program also allowed con-



Photo by Tom Dekle

Jack Gustafson, of Hodgenville Elementary (LaRue County), blows some bubbles during an "On The Road To Learning" science experiment to determine if the shape of a bubble wand will affect the shape of the bubble. Beside him, Shay Rogers helps Kadence Trammell with her own investigation.

tinuation through the summer of a FRYSC "back pack program," which provides food for children to take home for use during the week.

"One thing that's been really important to me is that we have got the children learning and participating with their families during the week," Terstegge said.

Students took home a family-learning log to keep track of educational experiences through the week, Terstegge said. They also

received a book each week, which they took home and kept.

With that kind of success, program originator and the Village FRYSC Director Christy VanDeventer said the program would almost certainly be continued — and perhaps expanded — next year.

The program itself functioned pretty much as expected, VanDeventer said, but with better advertising could have reached even more households.

Blue Ribbon Panel releases report for low-performing schools

The Blue Ribbon Panel on Interventions in Low-Performing Schools has released its report, which outlines processes and directions for Kentucky Department of Education staff as they work with academically low-performing schools and districts. During its August meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education accepted the report and authorized staff to move forward with implementing its recommendations, which include:

- a framework of "promising practices" that align with the state's Standards and Indicators for School Improvement
- a four-step intervention and support model that focuses on individual district's needs and the level of intervention and assistance they need
- changes to regulations and laws, including allowing the state board to remove school lead-

ers and staff for academic deficiencies, authorizing a full-time intervention team to run schools as needed, funding for reduced student/teacher ratios and creating a statewide teacher-evaluation system

In January 2008, Commissioner Jon E. Draud convened the Blue Ribbon Panel on Interventions in Low-Performing Schools, inviting representatives of stakeholder groups across Kentucky to join him in addressing one of the most critical issues facing educators to date — how to maximize student achievement, particularly in low-performing schools, and help all schools reach the goal of proficiency by 2014.

One of the resources used by the panel was "The Turnaround Challenge," the report of the Mass Insight Education and Research

Institute in Boston, Massachusetts. The focus was to take quick and decisive action around low-performing schools to rapidly improve student performance.

After a review of the Mass Insight work, the panel members felt that using that framework to organize the intervention strategies they had collected would provide a logical, easy-to-follow blueprint for schools that should implement improvement across all areas and would have the most impact in turning around schools with consistent low student performance.

The Promising Practices Framework document that resulted from summarizing and organizing the primary intervention strategies under the Mass Insight framework includes:

- Safety, Discipline & Engagement — Students feel secure and

inspired to learn.

- Action Against Adversity — Schools directly address their students' poverty-driven deficits.
- Close Student-Adult Relationships — Students have positive and enduring mentor/teacher relationships.
- Shared Responsibility for Achievement — Staff feels deep accountability and a missionary zeal for student achievement.
- Personalization of Instruction — Individualized teaching is based on diagnostic assessment and adjustable time on task.
- Professional Teaching Culture — Continuous improvement occurs through collaboration and job-embedded learning.
- Resource Authority — School leaders can make mission-driven decisions regarding people, time, money and programs.

- Resource Ingenuity — Leaders are adept at securing additional resources and leveraging partner relationships.
- Agility in the Face of Turbulence — Leaders, teachers and systems are flexible and inventive in responding to constant unrest.

The framework also correlated easily with the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement, which are familiar to educators across the state and provide the central focus of KDE's work with schools that have not yet reached proficiency goals.

MORE INFO ...

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=slperfdescr
www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=dlperfdescr
 Elaine Farris, (502) 564-5130,
elaine.farris@education.ky.gov

Star of Teaching goes the extra mile for students

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Last year, a student in Laura Sanders' kindergarten class was often missing the morning bus to school because the child's mother was up late a lot at night with four young children and had a hard time getting out of bed in the mornings.

Sanders, who teaches at Cumberland Trace Elementary (Warren County), was determined to make sure the child started arriving at school on time and the mother didn't end up going to court on truancy charges, so she started calling the student's home early every morning to wake up the mother.

She did this for several months.

"The alarm was not waking her up in the morning," Sanders said. "I believed that she was doing the best she could."

Going the extra mile helped Sanders win the 2008 American Stars of Teaching award for Kentucky.

American Stars of Teaching is a national honor recognizing superior teachers having track records of improving student achievement, using innovative instructional strategies and making a difference in the lives of their students. Sanders is the lone Kentucky recipient of the honor this year.

"Laura Sanders works well with students and also with colleagues," Cumberland Trace Principal Mary Evans said. "She helps us all be better teachers through her encouragement, positive attitude and her perseverance. ... Her tireless work ethic and her sense of gratitude. She shows appreciation for even the smallest of things. She leads through example."

Sanders is the second Warren County teacher to be recognized with the American Stars of Teaching award. Oakland Elementary School teacher Donna Carrier won the award in 2004. Last year's recipient was Kelda Nelson, an upper primary teacher at Crabbe Elementary (Ashland Independent).

Relationships with parents and fellow teachers

Whether it's habitually calling a hard-working mother who is having trouble getting children to school on time or greeting children as they get off the school bus, Sanders feels it's vital for teachers to stay connected to parents and students outside the classroom.

"Because of my commitment to my students and their achievement, I am willing to go the extra mile," Sanders said. "I want to help my students at home, too."

"Laura gives 110 percent at everything she does ... whatever it takes to make each kindergartner successful," Evans added. "She spends many hours meeting with individ-



Photo by Amy Wallot

Laura Sanders, 2008 American Stars of Teaching winner, leads her kindergarten students, Christian Brown, left, and Sarah Kessler in counting to 10 at Cumberland Trace Elementary (Warren County). Sanders has been a teacher there for 11 years.

ual families of her students before the school year starts to help them feel comfortable with her. She keeps very close contact with families throughout the year. She greets students as they get off the bus. She stays connected to children and families many years after they leave her classroom."

Sanders, who always aims to make learning fun and safe for her students, says that's not possible without her fellow kindergarten teachers at Cumberland Trace, 2003 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Patrice McCrary and Karen Craig, who served as Sanders' student-teacher last year before joining the staff this school year.

"We have a common planning time each day," Sanders said. "We eat lunch together daily. We also flexible-group our children for reading and math. I know my partners will take care of my students just like they do their own."

Having a child-centered classroom

Sanders always wanted to teach.

"I watched my mom teach and knew it was for me," she said of her mother, Annis Wigington, who is now retired from L.C. Curry Elementary (Warren County). "I come from a family of teachers. I can't see myself in any

other profession."

Her mother has been one of her strongest influences in the classroom, Sanders said, as well as another retiree, Warren Elementary School's Rebecca Clark, who guided Sanders through student teaching.

Sanders' husband, Steve, also is an educator. He is the assistant principal at Lost River Elementary in Bowling Green.

When it comes to teaching kindergartners, Sanders has taken what she's learned from those who have influenced her and come up with a teaching style that is adaptive to each child's needs. She believes patience is a must-have in adapting and getting the most out of kindergartners.

"It's something that comes naturally for me at school, but I don't have it at home with my two boys," she joked.

Sanders added she tries to fill her classroom with lots of color, hands-on learning, praise and structure.

"By December my students can run the class because they know the routine," she said. "I have a consistent discipline and management philosophy, too. All students are capable of learning at their own pace. Every child should have an opportunity to learn at

his or her own level and to develop potential to the fullest."

Evans said Sanders excels at adapting to her students' needs.

Sanders' classroom is "totally child-centered and designed to make continuous progress possible," said Evans, who has worked with Sanders for more than a decade. "She believes in ongoing assessment and frequently adjusts her teaching to better meet the needs of her students. She is continuously monitoring the progress of her students. Her classroom is filled with learning opportunities from floor to ceiling."

Cumberland Trace is one of only two Warren County schools to receive a Reading First grant.

"Reading First has made me a better reading teacher," Sanders said. "This grant has provided me multiple opportunities to learn new strategies and grow as an effective reading teacher. I think as a teacher, you can always get better. When you stop working on getting better at this job, then you need to quit."

MORE INFO...

laura.sanders@warren.kyschools.us

Learning doesn't stop when Corbin's school bells ring

By Susan Riddell

susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Corbin Independent recently won a national summer-learning award for its 21st Century Redhound Enrichment Program (REP), but this is by no means just a summer-learning program.

Under the guidance of Mark Daniels and Karen West, Corbin's Redhound after-school program is an all-encompassing, thematic time for student learning and fun. Most importantly, the programs keep children in a safe, nurturing environment until parents are able to be with them.

"In our district, we know that 88 percent of students come from homes with working families," said West, the special projects curriculum supervisor in the district. "Across the board, you're seeing more of that. Parents need more working hours and sometimes more jobs. They need a safe place for kids to be.

"We know in particular with students around middle school age and beyond, the majority of illicit behavior, like drug and alcohol use, starts in after-school hours before 6 o'clock when mom and dad get home," West added. "If you create a good, productive environment for students during that time, it helps keep kids away from those behaviors."

Corbin's national award, the Excellence in Summer Learning Award, is from Johns Hopkins University. "It speaks well for the emphasis Kentucky is placing on after-school programs," West said of the award, the first won by a Kentucky school.

Linda Robinson, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers education consultant, said Corbin's after-school program stands out because of the work of Daniels, who started the program for Corbin schools, and West, whom Daniels hired.

"The big thing that separates Corbin from other programs is that Mark and Karen really think outside the box," Robinson said. "That's necessary for this type of program."

Corbin's after-school program

started as a Family Resource and Youth Services Center initiative in the early 1990s. A federal 21st Century grant provided funding beginning in 1998. That funding eventually ran out, but Corbin received a continuation grant this year.

Corbin provides after-school services for grades K-12, serving 200-250 students a day, according to West.

Programs for the younger and older students vary.

K-6 students are allotted homework time each day. "If they don't have homework, they work on literacy or reinforcement of math skills, things connected to what they are doing in their classrooms during the day,"

West said. "After that, we move into what we consider our enrichments, which are a rotation of several 30-minute activities that children can choose from. We have a good variety. We try to balance it so that one of the activities is connected to academics or core subject areas."

Both West and Robinson stress that nothing involved in the after-school program resembles paper and pencil-type teaching.

"We in no way, shape or form want our after-school programs to look like school," Robinson said. "The kids will walk home if they are not interested in what's going on. We want to make it fun and engaging. We support literacy, but it may come in the form of a theatre production. For math, we might take 'Shake, Rattle and Roll' and put in lyrics involving multiplication tables."

"Everything is hands-on activities," West added. "In many teacher editions on the side notes, there are suggested activities and enrichments. Those are the things we tend to do — the things teachers wish they had time to get to in class. Schools are expected to be all



Photo by Amy Wallot

Student Michael Laun practices a move in an after-school karate program led by Missy Karr at Corbin Elementary (Corbin Independent). Third- and 4th-grade students participate in the program at the school.

and do all, and after-school provides the things that schools just can't get into the daily routine."

Clubs like karate, scrapbooking and cheer, meet weekly during after-school program time as well.

For the older students, after-school activities are centered on the high school café.

"The café is in our media center, and that is the hub of that program," West said. "We have the computers down there, tables for homework, virtual high school activities. Students will come in, grab a snack, check e-mails, and then it really gets going."

Peer-to-peer tutoring, ACT prep and makeup testing are several of the main components of the program for older students. Credited after-school classes such as TV production, radio and Latin also are offered, along with numerous club opportunities.

Two of Redhound's more popular programs for all ages are the community theatre program and the Redhound Theatre.

The community theatre program, which recently held a mys-

tery dinner theatre and is currently planning Christmas activities, is student-run and packed with arts and humanities curriculum.

"Everything we do, we are attentive to the core content, trying to figure out ways we can integrate it with the kids," West said.

The Redhound theatre enables the after-school program to show current movies — mainly matinees — to students. "Our auditorium (at Corbin High School) is a full-scale theatre with the largest screen in southeastern Kentucky. It costs \$1 per student."

West said a lot of work goes into coordinating the after-school program, and working with district classroom teachers is a key step in making it successful.

"Our schools have really strong horizontal alignment," West said. "We look at what grades are covering and reinforce those skills in the after-school program. If I have a student who is not doing well, we go to the teacher and see if we can't come up with something to target for that child."

"When there are students in academic need, the teachers do a great

job of referring them to us, too," West added. "We initially bring in a lot of kids for the academic component but once they see the other things we offer and do, they want to stay and participate in other things."

REP has documented success.

"We track student grades from the beginning of the year to the end of the year to see what kind of impact we have in performance," West said. "We track attendance and test scores."

In 2006, more than half of the students who attended regularly increased their grades by one letter grade or more in both mathematics and reading courses. Also, more than 75 percent of students who attended regularly earned a proficient score or above on state testing in mathematics, and more than 80 percent earned a score of proficient or above in reading.

Even with solid student participation and teacher collaboration, REP wouldn't be able to sustain its success if not for partnerships within the community.

"If we want to offer something special for the younger students, we go and find high school students to help. We've done a dance class with members of the high school dance team who needed community service hours," West said. "We started karate after a new center opened up in town. The center was just getting started, so the staff came to the school and worked with our kids. It was a recruiting tool for them, and it helped our students with another offering."

Robinson said those partnerships are a big reason the Redhound Enrichment Program was recognized on a national level.

"Johns Hopkins found Corbin unique because of its rural setting and its use of so many collaborative efforts, both inside the building and outside," Robinson said. "It truly is a wonderful program."

MORE INFO...

Linda Robinson, linda.robinson@education.ky.gov

Karen West, karen.west@corbin.kyschools.us

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Kentucky educators partnering with researchers

Kentucky professors, key educators and teachers will partner with researchers from the University at Albany on the next phase of the National Study of Writing Instruction. The multi-state research project is designed to identify ways in which writing is being used and taught in the major academic subjects (English, mathematics, science and social studies) in the middle and high school grades.

Its goal is to create the knowledge base from which to improve writing instruction in ways that better prepare high school graduates to meet the writing demands of the workplace and college.

This year, researchers from the National Study of Writing Instruction are collaborating with university-based researchers and key educators in California, Kentucky, Michigan, New York and Texas. They will gather data about writing instruction in a subset of schools identified as effective in the teaching of writing.

The five states were chosen to reflect a range of approaches to statewide assessment and accountability of student writing across the subjects.

The research is funded by the Chicago-based Spencer Foundation and the National Writing Project.

Kentucky, in particular, has included writing portfolios as a component of its assessment since 1992. Well-known writing researcher and professor George Hillocks noted that the "Kentucky portfolio assessment of writing is an exemplary assessment by many criteria (which) promote authentic writing, rather than the formulaic."

While the portfolio and on-demand assessments for writing are not unique to Kentucky, Kentucky is the only state to sustain the statewide assessment of writing portfolios over such a long period of time (1992-present), providing valuable data to support the state in its efforts.

In his research, Hillocks said "the difference in Kentucky lies in the nature of the assessment, the training afforded the teachers and the guidelines set by the state. Kentucky has more open criteria for good writing, more teacher education through the eight Writing Project sites, strong guides to the teaching of writing in its various state and local handbooks, and an assessment that permits development of writing in a serious way."

Because these assessments promote such valuable instruction, several Kentucky schools will be included in the National

Study of Writing Instruction.

John Hagaman of Western Kentucky University, Sally Martin of Eastern Kentucky University and Lee Ann Hager, writing consultant with the Kentucky Department of Education, will be leading the Kentucky team.

Educators participate in poster project

Professionally staffed, well-funded and well-utilized school libraries are a key to the success of every school, and more important than ever as schools work toward achieving the goal of proficiency by 2014.

Additionally, public libraries are vital education partners, providing support for teachers and students through universal access to educational programs, databases and resources, as well as public access computers and free Internet access.

Many public libraries provide homework help programs, too.

School administrators in Kentucky are urged to support the use of school and public libraries to ensure the success of all students.

At the 2008 Kentucky Association of School Administrators conference, more than 40 administrators from across the state participated in the Great Schools, Great Libraries! (GSGL) READ poster initiative. This initiative is an extension of the READ poster project, in which all of the state's elected officials and many General Assembly members participated to support public libraries. To access this gallery, visit <http://kdla.ky.gov/READgallery>.

Each participant had his or her photo taken holding a favorite book. The Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA) encouraged all participants to use their READ posters to promote literacy and school and public libraries in their districts. Participants included superintendents, principals and district office personnel.

Visit <http://kdla.ky.gov/gsgallery> to view the GSGL READ posters, which include the READ posters of the state's top education officials: the Kentucky Board of Education, Education Secretary Helen Mountjoy and Education Commissioner Jon E. Draud.

KDLA sponsored the GSGL initiative with support from the education cabinet communications office.

Inaugural technology partnership award granted

William E. Stilwell, a retired professor at the University of Kentucky who still manages university listservs and provides faculty



Photo by Amy Wallot

Catching up

Betty Sue Johnson, with the Kentucky Council on Economic Education, speaks with Gene Wilhoit, former commissioner of education, at the Kentucky Council for the Social Studies annual conference in Louisville on Sept. 24. Wilhoit is currently the executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers.

support, is the first recipient and namesake of an award that recognizes technology partnerships.

The 2008 Stilwell K-12 Education Technology Partnership Award recognizes outstanding efforts to improve the educational experiences and opportunities for public school students and teachers in Kentucky. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) plans to present the award annually.

"Bill was the overwhelming first choice for this award, and naming it after him is a reflection of the selfless work he's done to improve educators' access to modern technology," said David Couch, associate commissioner of the KDE Office of Education Technology. "It's great to be able to recognize someone who's done so much for the K-12 community."

William Stilwell retired from UK in 2006, but continues to work on the university's Web site and manage listservs, including more than 140 that are specifically geared toward K-12 teachers and administrators. These K-12 listservs provide ways for educators to communicate regularly on topics of importance and share information, ideas and resources among the groups. Currently, the listservs have more than 30,000 subscribers.

Stilwell earned a Ph.D. from Stanford University and is a licensed psychologist. His areas of research include human service delivery systems, counseling psychology training and technology in psychological services.

New superintendent representative named to KSBIT board

The Kentucky Association of School Superintendents has selected Hart County Superintendent Ricky Line as the organization's representative on the board of trustees of the Kentucky School Boards Insurance Trust (KSBIT).

Line replaces Daviess County Superintendent Tom Shelton, whose term had expired.

Line is a 1969 graduate of Hart County High School. He holds degrees from the University of South Carolina, South Carolina State College and Western Kentucky University. He is a former high school principal and basketball coach in Kentucky and South Carolina. Line brings more than three decades of school administration experience to the KSBIT Board of Trustees.

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Conferences & Workshops

Storytelling and workshops

The Kentucky Storytelling Association (KSA) will host the Fifth Annual Kentucky Storytelling Conference Nov. 7-8 in Shepherdsville. This storytelling event features open-mic storytelling and workshops for teachers, librarians, storytellers, listeners and all others interested in the storytelling art. Registration at the door is \$35 or individuals may attend just the evening open mic storytelling Friday or Saturday for \$5 per person or \$10 per family each night. For more information, contact Betsy Fleischer at (859) 734-3194.

www.kystory.org

Research of African American students

The 2008 Conference on the Mathematics, Teaching, Learning and Research of African American Students will be Nov. 13-14, in Little Rock, Ark. There are openings to attend, present, sponsor or host a booth. Slots for research and teaching presentations are open until filled. Early bird registration is available online at

www.bannekermath.org/conferences/BBA2008

Teachers of dance, drama

Kentucky Alliance for Arts Education and the Kentucky Theatre Association will host their annual joint professional development day for teachers of dance and drama Nov. 8 in Lexington at the University of Kentucky. Eight hours of professional development credit will be offered.

www.theatreky.org

i-Jam Internet Safety Conference

i-Jam, an initiative of Kentucky Child Now in collaboration with the Kentucky Attorney General and the Kentucky Department of Education, will host the first annual Internet Safety Conference in Lexington on Nov. 24-25. The two-day event is a highly interactive experience geared toward educating, empowering and engaging adults who work with youth. i-Jam is a three-year project designed to build knowledge and increase awareness of all aspects of the cyber environment, online social networking and the permanency of online behavior. For more information or to register, contact Doris Settles, (502) 227-7722.

www.kychildnow.org

Ending sexual assault and domestic violence

The 10th annual Ending Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Conference in Lexington is set for Dec. 8-11. There also will be a Green Dot Institute on Dec. 8 and a Human Trafficking Pre-Conference Dec. 9. Continuing Educational Credits will be available for professional art therapists, licensed professional counselors, marriage and family therapists, psychologists, social workers, alcohol and drug counselors, nurses, attorneys. EILA (Effective Instructional Leadership Act) credit is for educators.

www.kasap.org

www.kdva.org

Contests & Other Events

Grants for 'Mary Goes To School' program

In an effort to reach more children, the Mary Todd Lincoln House is taking Mary on the road through an educational program, "Mary Goes to School." The program brings first-person interpretation directly to 4th- and 5th-graders across Kentucky. Grants are available to fund visits to any school in Kentucky. For more information, visit the "Educational" section at www.mtl-house.org/educational.html or e-mail mtl-house@alltel.net.

WKU journalism day, survey

The School of Journalism and Broadcasting at Western Kentucky University will host its annual Journalism Scholars Day program Nov. 6. This year's program is designed to motivate, challenge and inform teachers and students. In addition, WKU is identifying college-bound students interested in pursuing a career in journalism, photojournalism, advertising, public relations or broadcasting. Teachers are asked to pass the link provided on to journalism students. The School of Journalism and Broadcasting will only use the results of the survey to identify students interested in its programs. Media advisers will be entered into a drawing for a \$100 Wal-Mart gift card for every survey turned in listing their name as a media adviser. The deadline for survey submission is Nov. 5.

www.wku.edu/phpESP/public/survey.php?name=scholars_day_08

2009 Kentucky State Schools of Character

The Character Council of Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky is accepting nominations for the 2009 Kentucky Schools of

Character awards program (KSOC). KSOC recognizes schools or districts that excel in exemplifying the Character Education Partnership's (CEP) Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education and demonstrate an outstanding character education initiative that yields positive results in student behavior, school climate, and academic performance. Applications must be submitted by Dec. 8. For more information, contact the Character Council of Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky at (513) 467-0170. Applications may be downloaded at www.charactercincinnati.org.

Commonwealth Connection for 2008-09

Kentucky local, state and federal employees and retirees, including public school employees, can take advantage of the Kentucky State Parks' Commonwealth Connection program, which offers reduced rates on lodge rooms and cottages. Rates are good through March 31, 2009. Visit www.parks.ky.gov or call (800) 255-7275 to be transferred to the park of your choice. Be sure to mention the "Commonwealth Connection" to receive the special rate. Proof of government employment or past service may be required at check-in.

Slogan and essay competition

The Kentucky Education Association is sponsoring the 20th annual Slogan and Essay Contest. The slogan contest, for grades 6-8, addresses voting, voter registration and/or elections in Kentucky. The essay contest is for those in grades 9-12. Students must submit their essay online at www.sos.ky.gov/contests or by mail with an enclosed entry form. All entries must be submitted electronically or postmarked by Dec. 5. Mail entries to: ATTN: Slogan and Essay Contest, Office of the Secretary of State, 700 Capitol Ave., Suite 152, Frankfort, KY 40601.

www.sos.ky.gov/secdesk/initiatives/civics/contests/essay

NASA videoconferencing

NASA's Digital Learning Network presents a series of videoconferences to assist educators in staying current on NASA education resources and related products.

During the videoconferences, participants will be able to submit questions that will be addressed during the presentation.

The following topics will be covered from 4-5 p.m. EST each date:

- Student Observation Network, Nov. 19
- NASA Image Archive, Dec. 17
- STS-119, Jan. 28, 2009

(Continued on page 15)



Photo by Amy Walliot

Charles Straub Elementary (Mason County)

BULLETIN BOARD *(continued)*

- Chemistry: What Is Your Cosmic Connection to the Elements?, Feb. 25
 - Kepler Mission, March 25
 - Meteorology: An Educators Resource Guide for Inquiry-Based Learning, April 29
 - NASA Explores Virtual Worlds, May 27
- For more information, contact Caryn Long at caryn.long@nasa.gov.

<http://dln.nasa.gov/dln/content/webcast>

Berea Festival Dancers tour with Broadbridge

Aidan Broadbridge, featured violinist in the recent movie "Pride and Prejudice", will be accompanying the Berea Festival Dancers on a short tour Dec. 15-20. Prominently placed in the show are dances, music and costumes from Abraham Lincoln's boyhood. The show also includes dance selections from other eras in Kentucky's history. Audience participation can be included in the show when appropriate, and teaching workshops are available for schools wishing to expand their students' learning experience. For more information, contact Jennifer Rose at jennifer@jenniferrose.com.

Fall NASA-, NSF- and NOAA-sponsored opportunities

Free comprehensive curriculum and training are now available to teachers who apply to participate in three independent NASA, National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) science programs. Teachers will be able to engage classrooms in cutting-edge science and meet state standards at the same time after completing any or all of these curriculum training sessions.

www.us-satellite.net/pr09042008.html

UK High School Mathematics Day

The University of Kentucky Department of Mathematics and the College of Engineering will host a morning of activities for high school students interested in mathematics Nov. 8 on the UK campus. Individual or school participants should pre-register; there is no registration fee, but spaces are limited. For more information, contact Russell Brown at russell.brown@uky.edu or (859) 257-3951.

www.math.uky.edu/Undergrad/mathday

Louisville Orchestra concert performances

Teachers are invited to take students to several upcoming Louisville Orchestra concerts:

- Martin Luther King Day Concert – Jan. 18, 2009, 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.
- Lincoln Bicentennial Concert – Feb. 12-13, 2009, 10:30 and noon.

The Jefferson County Public Schools All-County Symphonic Orchestra is one of several participants in the performances.

Prices for each concert range from \$4-\$7 per student. For more information, contact Education Coordinator Matthew Baber at mbaber@louisvilleorchestra.org or (502) 585-9430.

Education outreach performances

The Kentucky Repertory Theatre's Education Outreach Performances for the fall will feature the following productions in Horse Cave:

- "To Kill a Mockingbird," through Nov. 15
- "Amadeus," through Nov. 15
- "King Lear," Nov. 21-Dec. 4

For more information, contact Kentucky Repertory Theatre at (800) 342-2177.

Resources

New curriculum resource for educators

The Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Curriculum Development has developed and released a new curriculum resource for educators — the Program of Studies and College Readiness Standards Alignment. This alignment is designed to help educators understand how Kentucky curriculum standards, the Program of Studies, align to the Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) College Readiness Standards. The intent of this document is to assist educators in linking instruction and assessment, thereby offering support toward student success on the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT assessments. For more information, contact Rae McEntyre at rae.mcentyre@education.ky.gov or (502) 564-2106.

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=epas

SREB Web site for online teachers

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) has a first-of-its-kind Web site that will help middle and high school online teachers connect with each other, find best practices, learn about research in the field, draw on classroom resources and more. Features of the site include a Web-based community, resources related to online classroom instruction, digital learning content, infor-

mation about professional development and more. SREB's many online learning resources can be found by going to www.sreb.org and clicking on the button on the left for the SREB Educational Technology Cooperative.

www.srebonline teachers.org

Dance Toolkit from KET

The second-edition of KET Dance Arts Toolkit is now available. There are cross-curricular connection suggestions within the lesson plans. Teachers can teach any subject by incorporating all four disciplines of the arts. For more information, contact Cynthia Warner at (859) 624-2789.

www.ket.org/artstoolkit

Earth history lesson

Dan Carey at the Kentucky Geological Survey has produced an earth history lesson for those interested. For more information, contact Dan Carey at carey@uky.edu or (859) 257-5500, ext. 157.

<http://kgsweb.uky.edu/download/misc/earthhistory.zip>

Starlab portable planetarium

Eastern Kentucky University's Hummel Planetarium has a new astronomy outreach program for schools, bringing a Starlab portable planetarium to schools in its 22-county service region. Part of the lessons are done outside the Starlab with students actively participating to learn the size and scale of the solar system, or the motions of the earth and moon. Students then enter the Starlab plan-

etarium and learn about stars and constellations. The lessons are designed for grades 3-5 with lessons for other grades coming at a later date.

www.planetarium.eku.edu/starlab_outreach.php

Special college report

A new report, "A Developmental Perspective on College and Workplace Readiness," deals with college readiness, workplace readiness and youth development, identifying areas of consensus as well as gaps. The report identifies several critical gaps in the criteria used by colleges and employers to determine the competence of young applicants. It also identifies strengths valued by colleges and employers, but largely overlooked in the youth development research literature.

www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2008_09_15_FR_Readiness-Report.pdf

Life through the lens

Supported by a Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) from the National Center for Research Resources, National Institutes of Health, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Microscope Imaging Station allows teachers and students to delve into the microscopic world to explore phenomena that would otherwise be out of reach. The activities section has ideas for integrating this resource into your instruction.

www.ncrr.nih.gov/clinical/cr_sepa.asp

www.exploratorium.edu/imaging_station

Changed your address? Let us know

If you don't want to miss an issue of *Kentucky Teacher*, please take a few moments to learn how to let us know when your address changes.

Kentucky Teacher receives mailing addresses for all active Kentucky certified classroom teachers and administrators from the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System. If you are a certified employee of a Kentucky public school, you can change your mailing information in one of two ways:

- Complete a change of address form that can be downloaded from the retirement system's Web site at http://ktrs.ky.gov/01_active_members/B_change_name.htm.
- Submit a written request that includes your name, old address, new address, Social Security number and your signature.

Mail the form or your written request to:
Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System
ATTN: Tammy Brown
479 Versailles Rd.
Frankfort, KY 40601

If you are not a current teacher or administrator, e-mail your change of address to kyteacher@education.ky.gov or by mail to:
Kentucky Teacher
612 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

Individualized instruction key for Special Education Teacher of the Year

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

It isn't hard to see why Selina Meyer has a job teaching the functional mental disability self-contained class at Indian Trail Elementary School (Jefferson County). She has a cousin in another state who has a mental disability.

"She did not have a good educational career," Meyer said. "I just felt like she deserved better than she had gotten. It just fired me up."

Her cousin, who is now in her 40s, is still capable of learning and bright, and Meyer feels that she wasn't given an opportunity to learn. "I feel like any child that comes through my door is capable of learning and it is my job to make them as successful as they can be," she said.

It's not hard for others to see how good Meyer is at her job, either. She will be recognized as the Special Education Teacher of the Year in November at the State Council of Exceptional Children Conference and will compete for the National Special Education Teacher of the Year.

Alexis Varney, Low Incidence program specialist with Jefferson County Public Schools, recruited Meyer as a senior at the University of Kentucky and has known her since her first year of teaching.

"Selina Meyer is one of the best teachers I have had the pleasure of working with in my 33-year career as a special educator," Varney

said. "She is the teacher I would want teaching any child, the teacher I would want as a peer and the teacher I would want leading others."

Deborah L. Bohn, who also teaches children with mental disabilities at Indian Trail Elementary, has known Meyer for seven years, and says she moved to the school not only to teach with her friend, but to learn from her as well.

"If other teachers across the state could encompass her teaching skills, her ability to advocate for her students, her desire to see her students succeed and her huge heart, then we would have a state full of perfect teachers," Bohn said. "I can't tell you the number of teachers our district sends to her classroom to observe her teach. It is hard to put into words what she does. She is the definition of systematic instruction, which is the basis for teaching children with moderate to severe disabilities. Her teaching is intentional, structured and consistent."

Meyer helped develop Jefferson County's Exceptional Child Education Alternate Assessment Instructional Framework Guide, a document that assists teachers in teaching core content standards and administering the Alternate Portfolio to their students.

Meyer wanted to emphasize using research-based instruction. "I felt that it was really important that other teachers be able to see some kind of guide or lesson plan on how to teach core content using systematic instruction," she said.

In special education, direct and systematic instruction is key, Meyer said. She breaks topics down into simple terms and builds upon existing skills.

"You really have to analyze where your student is at and go back to where they are successful and build upon that," she said.

She has 10 K-5 students in one room, and they are



Photo by Amy Wallot

Selina Meyer works with student Joseph Harrington in her class at Indian Trail Elementary (Jefferson County). Meyer typically has 10 K-5 students in one room, and they are all on different levels.

all on different levels. She divides them into three groups, depending on their skills.

"It amazes me at how many people are shocked when I say that we work on guided reading and shared reading and addition and number recognition, that we're not just teaching functional skills in our classroom, that we are teaching core content and that we are teaching academic skills," Meyer said.

She joins the general education teachers in grade-level planning groups or gets lesson plans ahead of time and adapts materials for her students. Meyer said general education teachers help with alternate assessments and also help with adapting materials for her students.

Meyer said she has built many wonderful relationships with her fellow teachers, who fight to get her kids in their classes. They work hard to mainstream students when appropriate, and they educate the other students about those who have mental disabilities.

"I think that education is a huge part of understanding, and I think that is one reason why collaboration is successful here," she said.

Students start mainstreaming in itinerant classes such as art, physical education, music and library, and she allows them to stay in the classroom as long as their behavior is acceptable. She also looks at the lessons, as some students don't do as well with lectures as they do with hands-on activities.

Traditional students are very excited to work with her students, she said.

"I try to stand back as much as I can in the room and let the other students help my students," Meyer said. "I think they feel good about themselves when they help our kids."

Bohn said Meyer, like most good teachers,

loves teaching and her students. What sets her apart is she goes beyond being good.

"Selina gets involved in all aspects of her students' education, even if it means going to their house in the morning and picking them up for school, because they keep missing the bus (yes, she did that), taking them to dinner after school, then coming back to school for the school dance so that they can participate in social activities as their same-age peers do, then taking them home afterwards," Bohn said.

Varney agrees.

"Selina represents what I consider to be the best in the field. She is an advocate for her students, an excellent teacher and works hand in hand with the parents of her students to form a true partnership in providing the best learning experience possible," she said. "In instruction, she considers the needs of each child and structures her classroom to meet those individualized needs."

Meyer said being a good teacher of students with disabilities is no different than being a good teacher of any other kind of students.

"You just have to care about the kids. You really have to get to know the kids for who they are and that they are people," she said. "You have to build relationships before you can get anywhere else with the students. You really have to know who they are to get to the heart of the academics."

MORE INFO...

Selina Meyer, selina.meyer@jefferson.kyschools.us, (502) 485-8268



Meyer takes students Lorenzo James, left, Brianna Mills, center, and Adrien Blair on a walk during a break from class at Indian Trail Elementary (Jefferson County), where she has taught for eight years.